



STATEMENT BY KEN RAIT, CAMPAIGNS DIRECTOR
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My name is Ken Rait and I am Campaigns Director for the Campaign for America's Wilderness. Seven months ago, I hiked with Greg Walden and Earl Blumenauer for a couple hours during their 4 day trek around Mount Hood. Along the Timberline Trail we talked about our shared values of wanting to leave a legacy for future generations, our responsibility to protect key areas in order to ensure abundant, clean drinking water for downstream communities and important habitat for salmon and other native wildlife. The three of us understood that there is common ground on Mount Hood, and that the foundation for this common ground is the wilderness we are committed to protecting.

The Campaign for America's Wilderness supports the wilderness components of the Mt. Hood legislation Congressmen Walden and Blumenauer have announced today. This new legislation represents an historic step forward, not only for Oregonians, but all Americans who have a stake in our precious national forests. If we are successful with this effort, it will be the fourth time that Oregon's congressional leaders have sent a Mount Hood National Forest wilderness bill to the President's desk since the landmark Wilderness Act passed in 1964.

We look forward to working with the congressmen and with Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith in the coming months to make new wilderness on Mount Hood a reality in 2006. Wilderness is our common ground on Mount Hood-- today we stand in support of the hard work this dedicated, bipartisan team is doing to protect it and to grant our children an enduring legacy.